

**Newsradio  
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July 26, 1999

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Salas:

Enclosed you will find nine (9) copies of comments from Sunbury Broadcasting Corporation on the issue of creation of a low power FM service (MM Docket No. 99-25 / RM-9802 / RM-9242). There is one copy for each member of the Commission and two for staff use.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joe McGranaghan", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Joseph A. McGranaghan  
President  
Sunbury Broadcasting Corporation

Encls: (9)

**Sunbury Broadcasting Corporation**  
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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

# In the Matter of Creation of a Low Power Radio Service

MM Docket No. 99-25  
RM-9802  
RM-9242

Comments of  
SUNBURY BROADCASTING CORPORATION  
(WKOK-AM / WQKX-FM / WEGH-FM)

We have no doubt that the motivation behind the idea to create a low power FM radio service is, if not totally altruistic, certainly high-minded. Unfortunately it is also fatally flawed. The majority of our comments will focus on the reasons why this service should not be implemented. We also offer some observations about how it must be done in the event the Commission is determined to do it regardless of the consequences.

To even contemplate the creation of this service until it can be firmly and completely established that it will cause no harm to the future of “In Band On Channel” digital transmission makes a mockery of the Commissions “commitment” to digital FM broadcasting. When the NAB, and others, asked for an extension for filing comments until December, when a clearer idea of the impact on digital will be available, the Commission was willing only to extend the comment period to August. Why? If creation of a low power FM service is a good idea, nothing would have been lost by the few extra months. If, on the other hand, and as is more likely, it is a bad idea and harmful to the future of digital FM broadcasting, then rushing full speed ahead with incomplete information will only make a bad situation worse.

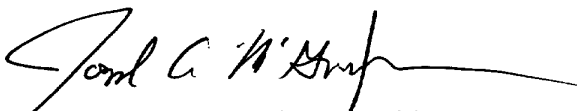
We believe the future of FM is clearly in digital transmission. To mortgage that future for the sake of political expediency would be the grossest dereliction of duty. We urge the Commission to take no further action on a low power FM service unless and until it can be convincingly demonstrated that its implementation will in no way harm "I.B.O.C."

Over and above the "I.B.O.C" issue, there are compelling reasons why a low power FM service still isn't a good idea. The proposed service, and the suggested uses for it, seem more suited to urban than rural areas. However, unless dramatic and completely unacceptable reductions in interference standards are enacted, most of these stations will be located in rural areas, where their ability to function as envisioned will be very limited. Also, if the service is commercial, the impact on existing small market broadcasters, who would not be permitted to own them, could be devastating. While the Commission has never concerned itself with protecting existing broadcasters from competition, perhaps it should. No one was ever served by a bankrupt radio station. If additional service in rural areas is needed, wouldn't it be a better idea to encourage would-be broadcasters to apply for some of the AM licenses returned to the commission over the years? In urban areas, if diversity of service tailored to small segments of the community is truly a necessity, then it must be achieved by other means.

If the Commission decides to create any low power FM stations it MUST NOT also create a privileged class of FM broadcasters. To assure that, the following items are essential: First, any low power FM stations created must have EAS equipment and be required to fully participate in their local EAS plan. Those who would choose to listen to these stations are certainly no less deserving of the protection EAS affords. Second, they must be required to maintain the same records and meet the same reporting standards as "full power" broadcasters. Third, their licensing and renewal process should be identical to "full power" stations. In short, the Commission's entire regulatory effort must be identical for all full and low power FM stations. Fourth, strict ownership limits should be imposed for this class of service. Finally, the service should be noncommercial in nature. Failure to require noncommercial operation will result in revenue being siphoned away from full power stations providing full service to the community. If a small segment of the population wants or needs such a specialized service, it should be willing to fund it.

I sincerely hope the Commission will consider to the issues raised in these comments and I thank you for the opportunity to address this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. McGranaghan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joseph A. McGranaghan, President  
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P. O. Box 1070  
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